



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front St. (Hwy M-72)
Empire, Michigan 49630-9797

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 4, 2005

L7617(SLBE)

Dear Park Stakeholder:

We are pleased to announce that Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has completed a Fire Management Plan (FMP) that emphasizes the protection of human life and property, both public and private, from wildfire within and adjacent to National Park Service lands. The plan also assists in the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Lakeshore for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The plan was supported by local fire departments and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and incorporated public input as well.

To develop the Fire Management Plan, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared that analyzed three alternatives: 1) No Action (Suppress All Wildland Fire and Exclude Prescribed Fire); 2) Suppress All Wildland Fires But Permit Prescribed Fire; and 3) Suppress All Wildland Fires On Mainland, Allow Wildland Fire Use on Manitou Islands, Permit Prescribed Fire.

Following an extended public comment period on the EA, and consideration of all comments, Alternative 3 was selected. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the Fire Management Plan reflect this alternative. Two Fire Management Units have been designated - the Mainland Unit and the Island Unit. All wildland fires on the mainland will have an aggressive initial suppression response. On North and South Manitou Islands, Wildland Fire Use will be permitted. Wildland Fire Use allows a naturally occurring (lightning caused) fire to burn under specific environmental conditions where and when fuel reduction or resource goals can be safely achieved using fire as a tool. These might include reducing fuels to lessen the risk of a catastrophic fire during drought conditions or to improve wildlife habitat. Wildland Fire Use will not be permitted on the mainland. Prescribed fire will be used on the mainland and the islands to achieve fuel and resource goals, but only under a very strict set of conditions (a "prescription").

The Fire Management Plan EA, FONSI, an EA Errata Sheet and a Question and Answer document have been placed on the park website (www.nps.gov/slbe) for public review. A copy of the Fire Management Plan is available for review at area libraries as well as at the Lakeshore Headquarters Library in Empire.

Sincerely,

Dusty Shultz
Superintendent